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U. S. Dept. Agriculture  
Extension Service

THE PART OF THE SUPERVISOR IN AN EXTENSION  
MARKETING PROGRAM \*

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Supervision has been defined as "carrying out the purposes of administration". Administration having decided that extension marketing activities should be strengthened, it becomes the job of supervisors to see that this decision is carried into effect. Supervision by two types of workers is involved.

First, by that group of workers which many agencies are calling activity leaders and which we in extension usually call specialists. In a marketing program this group of workers looks after those matters concerned with the technical subject matter. (1) They see that appropriate subject matter is assembled from whatever source it may be available, and put into shape for use by various cooperators. (2) They devise methods of subject matter presentation that particularly apply to the specific objectives to be attained. (3) They assist in training the various groups of cooperators, both staff and lay who will actively work on the marketing program, and (4) They promote marketing activities to the best of their ability, at all times and under all circumstances.

The second type of supervision is usually carried out by that group of extension workers variously known as state agents, district agents, agricultural or home demonstration agent leaders or assistant leaders. These responsibilities are on a little broader base than those of the activity leaders. Marketing is only one of several activities which they must work into an already over-full program.

More specifically these responsibilities are four in number. First, they must maintain the extension field organization. This involves getting local cooperation, obtaining funds, finding qualified personnel - in general keeping the extension machine in good working order. The Cooperative Extension Service, with a comparatively small staff, works with a large number of rural people on a great many farm, home and community problems. This is made possible by a smoothly functioning organization.

Second, they help to plan local extension programs. To do this well, the supervisor must have a good understanding of marketing as well as other problems of the area in which he works. Also he must have a knowledge of results that may be expected from extension work on these problems if he is to do a good "selling" job to county program committees. He must strive for a well balanced program, one which gives a proper share of attention to each of the more important problems as seen by the people in the county. Often this must be accomplished under legitimate pressure from several activity leaders.

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Third, they must see that the county staff is properly trained - in this instance to carry on a marketing program. To me this is one of our greatest responsibilities at this time. There is little likelihood in the near future of our being able to employ any considerable number of men and women trained in the field of marketing. Most of our present county staff are production trained. County agents will continue to hesitate to work on marketing until they acquire a confidence in their ability to do as good work in this field as they now do in production. This confidence comes only through training and successful experience. The supervisor's job is to help set up a streamlined training program for the entire county staff. Then open up the agent's calendar so that he has the week, two weeks or month that is necessary for this training.

Finally, the supervisor must evaluate the work done, the methods used, as well as the effectiveness of the county workers. In this, as in most of his other activities, the good supervisor does not work alone. He and the activity leader are close cooperators. Neither is at his best unless supplemented by the other. Likewise, both must be supported by the information and research groups. An activity like extension work in marketing is truly a cooperative activity, calling for assistance from almost every group that makes up the Cooperative Extension Service.